

March 5, 1974

PRESIDENT: All right, Senator DeCamp, give it the try.

SENATOR DE CAMP: What's our overall purpose?

SENATOR FRANK LEWIS: Well, out of concern that I may get away from the germaneness of the issue, I will make an attempt. The overall purpose is quite simply in my judgment and I think that stems from a couple of Supreme Court cases and had they been upheld and continued to be upheld, the Rodriguez case and others, we'd have comparable education for every state or every child in this state at a comparable cost to his parents. And that's the purpose of providing state aid. Obviously any state that relies on property tax as its sole means of support really has a very unfair burden on many, many people. Nebraska, by the way, ranks number three in the United States (I believe that's correct) in the amount of reliance on property tax as related to per capita income. So the purpose is a very simple purpose and I think it's been stated many times, comparable education at a comparable cost.

PRESIDENT: Keep your questions narrow, Senator DeCamp.

SENATOR DE CAMP: Okay. I'll certainly do that. Okay, then I can see where we've got a grave and serious problem at this point because I think your understanding is the reason for state aid may be completely different than that which has been stated on the floor for the last several years to the best of my knowledge. The cases you're citing, the Supreme Court didn't go along with anyway.

SENATOR FRANK LEWIS: I prefaced it with that, Senator DeCamp. Perhaps you weren't listening.

SENATOR DE CAMP: Okay, the point that's been made on the floor and in all the debate is that property taxes in the State of Nebraska have reached an intolerable and confiscatory level and that the primary purpose, at least in this state legislature, is to reduce property taxes and.....

PRESIDENT: Well, Senator DeCamp.....

SENATOR DE CAMP: Use the sales and income tax as the alternative method. You're talking about the philosophical arguments involved in those two cases which as I say, the Supreme Court has overruled or didn't go along with. Now, my next question is then, you've already answered the first one. My next question is if as I've stated, the primary purpose of our state aid is to reduce property taxes, then what guarantee is built into any bill or what program is incorporated into any legislation which guarantees a property tax reduction for that sales and income tax raise if it isn't the spending limitation. Is there anything else that guarantees it?

PRESIDENT: Senator Lewis.

SENATOR FRANK LEWIS: Well, first of all, I'd like to go back to the first point you made, Senator DeCamp, and I'm sure you were preparing your next question and failed to listen to my response. That when I said at a comparable cost, that means a balanced cost, you see, and in essence, and then I told you that Nebraska right now ranks third in the amount of property tax we pay per capita income which would coincide with your particular point that certainly property tax is out of line. Now, I'm going to answer this question and I hope you'll listen to it before you start preparing your next question, Senator, or it'll be a waste of my time and yours. First of